



Yours truly,
Charles B. Ray.

SKETCH

OF THE

with
LIFE OF REV. CHARLES B. RAY *1800*
Ray 5.3.
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Ray, N. L.



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TO THE MEMORY

OF

A BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER,

THE FLOWER OF WHOSE LIFE WAS DEVOTED

TO THE

CAUSE OF THE OPPRESSED,

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

HIS FAMILY.

PREFACE.

THIS memorial work is designed to embody a sketch of the life of the Rev. Charles B. Ray, especially in relation to his labors in the anti-slavery conflict. As he outlived so many of those who actually labored with him in that great struggle, much that might have been said must necessarily remain unwritten.

The autobiographical form is given as far as possible, for none can more fittingly record the events and vivid impressions of a long experience than he who has realized them.

The latter part of the work is devoted to tributes and reminiscences, some having been prepared for its pages.

To those kind friends who consented to add to the interest of this volume, the family would here again heartily express their thanks and deepest gratitude for the willingness thus manifested to aid them in perpetuating the memory of one who was at once a companion, a father and a guide.

F. T. R.

H. C. R.

A LEAF from Freedom's golden chaplet fair,
We bring to thee, dear father ! Near her shrine
None came with holier purpose, nor was thine
Alone the soul's mute sanction ; every prayer
Thy captive brother uttered found a share
In thy wide sympathy ; to every sign
That told the bondman's need thou didst incline,
No thought of guerdon hadst thou but to bear
A loving part in Freedom's strife. To see
Sad lives illumined, fetters rent in twain,
Tears dried in eyes that wept for length of days—
Ah ! was not that a recompense for thee ?
And now where all life's mystery is plain,
Divine approval is thy sweetest praise:

H. C. R.

SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF REV. CHARLES B. RAY.

I.

CHARLES BENNETT RAY was born in Falmouth, Mass., on Christmas Day, 1807. He was the son of Joseph Aspinwall Ray and Annis Harrington ; the former, a man of sound understanding, possessed a correct knowledge of the men and events of his time, and for twenty-eight years occupied the responsible and honorable position of mail-carrier between Falmouth and Martha's Vineyard—an office whose duties he discharged with fidelity, proving himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him. The latter was a woman of keen religious sensibilities and much general intelligence, being an indefatigable reader ; when aged and paralyzed, she had the habit of borrowing books from the library of one of New Bedford's prominent divines, and so great was her love of

reading, that, at one time, he made the assertion that she had finished the perusal of nearly all the volumes contained in his library. The family was greatly respected in the village of Falmouth and there the children grew up and were educated. Charles was the eldest of seven children, four of whom were boys, and three girls.

His early education was received at the schools and academy of his native town—a beautiful rural spot picturesquely situated, which resembles an English village. Says *The History of Cape Cod*: “It has the reputation of being one of our handsomest New England villages;” and not only of this are the inhabitants justly proud, but also on account of its record for bravery in Revolutionary days. While quite a youth, Charles worked for five years on his grandfather’s farm in Westerly, R. I., which still remains in the family. After his experience in farm life he went to learn the boot-maker’s trade at Vineyard Haven. Subsequently he chose his life-work, resolving to study for the ministry, and in order to obtain his theological education, entered the Wesleyan Seminary at Wilbraham, Mass., where he won the esteem both of instructors and classmates; later, he studied at the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.

In 1832, he came to New York, and while awaiting more important openings toward a career of usefulness, he made available the manual training he had acquired and kept a boot and shoe store for a short time.

He was twice married, his first wife being Henrietta Green Regulus, and the second, Charlotte Augusta Burrough of Savannah, Ga., who now survives him. Of the seven children of the latter—two boys and five girls—three daughters only are living.

A few years after Mr. Ray reached this great city, he became identified with *The Colored American*, a short sketch of the history of which is here given. In January, 1837, appeared the first issue of a journal, edited by colored men, under the name of *The Weekly Advocate*, the editor then being the Rev. Samuel E. Cornish, and the proprietor, Mr. Philip A. Bell. It was published by Mr. Robert Sears, now of Toronto, Canada, a warm friend of the race. "After two months, it was thought best," so informs Mr. Sears, "for the grand cause of emancipation, to change the title to *The Colored American*;" therefore March 4, 1837, it appeared under the last-mentioned name. The means to aid in its publication were largely contributed by anti-slavery advocates, prominent among whom must be noticed that fearless and generous de-

fender of the cause, Arthur Tappan. In *The Life* of Mr. Tappan occurs this passage :

“The paper was intended to be the organ of colored Americans. Its columns were filled with excellent selected and original matter. It ably advocated the emancipation of the enslaved and the elevation of the free colored people ; and to this end it urged on the whites the abolition of caste, and on their own people a thorough education. Gifted men, among the people of color in New York and elsewhere—and there were not a few of them—had an opportunity that was well improved of addressing their people and the public at large in the columns of this excellent paper.”

In April, 1837, Mr. Ray became associated with *The Colored American* as general agent. In this capacity he traveled extensively, writing letters to the paper, which embodied the results of his labors and his reflections on the progress of the race in different parts of the country. He also lectured successfully in many cities, East and West, to bring before the people the interests of the paper and the noble aims to which it was devoted—never neglecting meanwhile to speak in behalf of the slave, whose welfare lay always near his heart.

At one time he wrote thus while on a lecturing tour :

“ GENEVA, *Sept.* 28, 1838.

“ DEAR BROTHER :

“ Since I last wrote you, I have attended the annual meeting of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society at Utica,* held the 19th, 20th, and 21st days of September. It was a meeting numerously attended by men from all parts of the State, strong for the slave. They came down from Clinton, and up from Chautauqua, down from Erie, and up from New York and the intermediate counties; the South gave up and the North kept not back. The lawyer came, the physician, the college professor, the student, the merchant, the mechanic, the farmer, yes, the honest farmer, all assembled in the emporium of old Oneida—for what? Why, of course, to divide the Union, and break up the peace of the Church, by praying over, talking about and forming resolutions in reference to slavery, the sin of the latter and a curse to the former! It was a glorious meeting, the best of the same character, perhaps, ever held under the sun, and one whose influence, before extinct, will put New York State into the scale of abolition, *en masse*, and strike terror to the consciences of slaveholders.

“ It was good to be there, and well it might, for there were our Stantons, our Chaplins, our Goodells, and a multitude more of our folks whom I cannot now mention; yes, and there were present some whom I will not, cannot own as our folks—the slaveholder was there, constant in attendance thrice a day, and I think

he learned what abolitionism is, and what Abolitionists are.

"It was a meeting of great harmony and deep feeling—feeling of the right character too, not of the heart only, but in the pockets, a true place to indicate how high the heart beats, and how much it feels in Utica. Well, it felt there \$12,000 worth in cash down, and pledges from men whose pledge is better than a check on the United States Bank, or for Treasury Notes at six per cent. The meeting was productive to *The Colored American*, \$40.

"I leave here this day at three o'clock for Canandaigua, thence to Le Roy, Genesee Co., whence you will probably hear from me again."

"Yours for the oppressed,

"C. B. R."

In 1838 he became one of the proprietors of the paper, and in 1839 assumed the position of editor; under his charge, as before, *The Colored American* continued to be ably conducted and strong in its advocacy of the great principles underlying humanity and justice. He retained the editorial management until 1842, during the remainder of the term of existence of the paper.

The cause of temperance, which so often occupies the mind of the thoughtful, always claimed the attention of Mr. Ray, and during

the years 1847-48 he was instrumental in causing many of his people to sign the pledge, and in organizing temperance societies among them all through the State of New York. He was president of several conventions of this character, and in the work was greatly respected and beloved by a large number of temperance followers.

For more than forty years he was a member of the New York African Society for Mutual Relief—a large and flourishing body incorporated as early as 1810, of which he held the office of president for eight years, continuing, until the very last, his membership and a hearty participation in the work of the society he had joined so long before. The present members, in resolutions, have expressed their appreciation of the services and character of their late colleague.

As early as 1847 he evinced an active interest in educational affairs, and, with others, was made a member of an association incorporated by the Legislature of the State of New York. A part of its charter ran thus :

“The object and purpose of said society shall be the promotion of education among the colored children of the city and county of New York ; and all colored children between the ages of four and sixteen, residing in the city and county

of New York, shall be entitled to attend any of the schools established by the said society."

Under the following clause of the Act to incorporate this body, Mr. Ray was selected as one of the trustees :

"The affairs and business of said corporation shall be conducted and managed by twenty-one trustees to be chosen and elected as hereinafter directed, and who shall be persons of color, members of said corporation, and actually residing in the city and county of New York."

On all questions of progress in this direction, affecting his race in the city of New York, he was always ready with an opinion, with advice when called for, and also the employment of his time, and thus he was well known to many members of the Board of Education.

The zealous and untiring efforts of that noble woman, Miss Myrtilla Miner, to furnish instruction to colored children in Washington during the days of slavery, were warmly appreciated by him and he gave her substantial and valuable aid toward fitting up a building, where that school was held which, under the direction of its enthusiastic teacher, not only secured an education to numbers then in need of it, but also

became the inspiration of many institutions of a similar kind. Writing to him on one occasion, Miss Miner says with her characteristic expressiveness :

“ . . . There is nothing like attending promptly to one's own affairs ; but when one cannot do it one's self there is nothing like having a friend to help. For this last office I thank you a thousand and one times, . . . and am thankful for all your kindness and all you have done for me.”

Again she says :

“ Some day you will know how much good seed was sown in your kindly aid and sympathy, when we were all living by faith and not by sight.”

The following extract shows Mr. Ray's continued interest in the education of his people, down to a recent date :

“ Another feature of my work has been, as it still is, with no less interest, the education of the rising generation—the only legacy the poor have for their children, and better than which they cannot give them ; this I have made it a point ever to urge and inculcate, both upon parents and children. What better work can any one have before him—yea, what

so good for this life—than to interest the people to avail themselves of these facilities for their children! I can never lose interest in this work, as I never have, nor cease to inculcate it.”

Mr. Ray, after many years devoted to the ministry, speaks thus of his early consecration to religious work :

“ More than thirty years ago my then young heart burned with an anxiety to do good to my fellow-men, especially in a religious way which would allow of my making that alone my life-work ; and after some special preparation therefor, a field seemed to open for me among my brethren in this city. And more than twenty years ago, with the advice of friends, I entered upon this work to reach, first, the outcast portions of the people seldom reached with the Gospel and the means, motives, and blessings of a higher material, moral, and spiritual life. I have not, however, as well I could not, confined my labors exclusively to this class, but have been led to labor with and interest a better class with me in the same work. Thus I have gone on through more than twenty years of my more vigorous life, caring less, in fact, for my own interest than for the interest and spiritual welfare of others.

“ My work has not been, exclusively, a religious work ; my public position has necessarily brought to me every form of claim and

work peculiar to a poor and somewhat dependent people, and my advice and aid have been sought; my sympathies have consequently led me to give such counsel and aid as I could, often quite a tax on my time and energies. I have no disposition to sit idly by when there is so much Christian work within reach and pressing upon one's hands to do. Christian work is rest for me, it is refreshing; to look and not to do is not rest, and I shall hope to see fulfilled the Scripture, that he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, is earnest and anxious, shall doubtless return again, bringing his sheaves with him, and what shall not be gathered up here shall be in the great garner when the last harvest time shall come."

Before assuming charge of a church, Mr. Ray was associated with the Crosby Street Congregational Church—a body composed of a heroic band of men and women whose principles were in accord with the sacred idea that all men are brothers. To this society, almost unique as a religious organization, belonged many whose names are intimately connected with the anti-slavery movement.

In 1845, when he was installed as pastor of the Bethesda Congregational Church in this city, Rev. Samuel D. Cochrane, the minister of the church already referred to, delivered the

sermon, and—what may be considered as significant in view of Mr. Ray's co-operation for many years with these friends of freedom—Rev. Simeon S. Jocelyn gave the right hand of fellowship, and Lewis Tappan addressed the people.

Mr. Ray continued pastor of the Bethesda Congregational Church for more than twenty years; after worshiping in smaller edifices, the congregation moved thence to a commodious church building on Sullivan Street, and later, when the need for more religious organizations uptown seemed to be developing, a building was secured on Sixth Avenue where the congregation worshiped until 1868. During all these years Mr. Ray was also actively engaged in missionary work; and even after he ceased his labors as acting pastor he continued to preach—delivering a series of sermons for several winters to seamen in the lower part of the city—often assisting the pastor in charge of the Colored Home—and giving his services to aid a young and struggling Congregational Church in Brooklyn.

Connected with the Bethesda Congregational Church was a large and flourishing Sabbath-school, and it seems but fitting to append here the following tribute—an extract from a letter of sympathy written by one who was once a

member of the Sabbath-school, and an attendant on the church services—evincing, as it does, a spirit of tenderness and gratitude that testifies to the deep hold their pastor had taken on the affections of the young who were brought under his influence.

“In early life he was my instructor, in later years he was my adviser; though time and years have intervened the memory of those days remains green with me. His life was one that those connected with him may well feel proud of, passed in relieving the distress of others—thinking not of trouble or cost where there was suffering to be relieved. Many a struggling soul may look for his success in life to the aid and fatherly counsel of the Rev. Charles B. Ray; though his lips are sealed in death, yet the memory of those deeds will ever enshrine his name in immortal green.”

Mr. Ray belonged to the Congregational Clerical Union, regularly attending its Monday meetings, where various topics of interest bearing on church work were discussed; he was also a highly respected member of the Manhattan Congregational Association—composed of many of the greatest thinkers among the clergy of that denomination—whose beautiful tribute to his memory is given at the close of this volume.

One of the benevolent enterprises in which he took a hearty interest was the liberal plan of that noble philanthropist, Gerrit Smith, who desired to give to the colored race the opportunity to become land-owners and intelligent cultivators of the soil. Mr. Ray speaks of it thus :

“ Our great friend, Gerrit Smith, conceived the idea of donating lands to three thousand colored men of this State, and entered upon so doing ; but to aid in this work of furnishing him the names of proper persons to be recipients, he designated certain colored men in different places thus to help him. It was the privilege of your humble servant to be one of the three assigned to this part of the State.”

Mr. Ray's high appreciation of the munificent gift accorded to his race was shown by his introducing, before a convention of colored men held in Troy, a resolution of thanks to the generous donor, as part of a Report on Agriculture, which he had been chosen to present. The resolution reads thus :

“ WHEREAS, Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro, has made a donation of 140,000 acres of land to 3,000 citizens of New York ; and

“ WHEREAS, This convention regards the above donation as a manifestation of love on the part of the donor ; a love for God, in carrying out the divine intention to grant to all a share in

the means of subsistence and happiness ; a love for humanity, in seeking the downtrodden and oppressed among men as the objects of this donation, and a love of human progress in placing in the hands of the oppressed the means of self-elevation ; and,

“ WHEREAS, The freedom, independence and steadiness of the farmer’s life will throw among the colored people elements of character essential to happiness and progress, therefore

“ *Resolved*, That this convention do express its deep thanks to Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro, for his splendid donation to the cause of God and humanity.

“ *Resolved*, That this convention do call upon the grantees of this land to forsake the cities and towns and settle upon and cultivate it, and thereby build a tower of strength for themselves.”

Again, in a private letter to Mr. Smith, he emphasizes thus his gratitude for the benefaction :

“ I hasten to express to you, the best I can on paper, the grateful emotions of my soul, the great deep of which is broken up by an act so generous and benevolent. Let me say that this plan of yours, to distribute the *richest* of earthly gifts, the *soil*, among the worthy of the poorest of the poor, because robbed and crushed, is, in my view, most magnanimous ; it is benevolence on a large scale, and is better to us than ten-fold the value in silver and gold. And I must

say that it is only in perfect keeping with yourself; and when your intention was made known to me, I confess that I was not much surprised. I thought, 'That is like Mr. Smith.' It appears to me that neither this act, nor any other of a similar character, can give you a larger place in my regard and esteem than you had; they are but developments of what I thought of you before. They may, as they will, overcome me with grateful emotions toward yourself, and lead me to thank God that He has raised up such a man. God has not intrusted you with such large possessions for nothing, and He means to show the world why He has committed to your care so much of His heritage. He knew that it was safe in your hands for the purposes for which He wanted it, and to which, in due time, He would devote it. O, how exalted the position, to be God's steward, and to have committed to one, great trusts, and how honored to be God's almoner to the poor!"

II.

DURING the greater period of Mr. Ray's activity slavery was at its highest state of agitation ; the times were perilous, great deeds were being enacted everywhere by noble champions of freedom, roused to action by an unquenchable love of justice and the resolve that all men should be free. He entered with eager earnestness into the contest to secure freedom to his downtrodden race, and his early identification with the anti-slavery cause is set forth in the subjoined extract :

“ It was my good fortune in the providence of God, to become early identified with the Abolition movement and associated with Abolitionists as one of them ; this was in 1833, in the early winter of which the American Anti-Slavery Society was formed.”

The great host of workers who aided in effecting the liberation of the slave may be divided into three classes : those who made eloquent appeals in his behalf with voice and pen, either to stir up an indifferent community or to refute antagonistic arguments—those who gave freely of their means to insure his purchase—and

those who not only went about quietly awakening an interest in the bondman, but actually came in contact with him, aiding him with counsel, sympathy, and often with shelter. To the last class belonged Mr. Ray, and in this, as in many great movements that have agitated the world, the deeds of those who came the nearest in every-day experience to the objects of their compassion, are often the least signalized.

His consecration to the great Abolition movement cannot be better given than in his own words. In speaking of missionary work in this great city he says :

“ During a major part of this period in the history of my work, slavery existed in our country in its more vigorous and threatening form and spirit, and in all measures opposing which, my principles and nature at once led me into a most hearty co-operation ; and especially in those measures for the aid and protection of fugitive slaves whose arrival during those times was almost of daily occurrence ; and many a midnight hour have I, with others, walked the streets, their leader and guide ; and my home was an almost daily receptacle for numbers of them at a time.”

As thus indicated, he proved his fidelity to the sacred cause of liberty, and his earnestness in contributing toward the final overthrow of

slavery, by rendering practical aid ; and, as lately alluded to, it often became necessary to interest those whose hearts not only beat in unison with the movement, but whose means could be made available. In co-operation with Lewis Tappan and others whose purse-strings were wont to be loosed at the call of humanity, he assisted in enabling many a slave to see the light of freedom. Several were taken by him to Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, which—under the inspiration of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, that great champion of the cause—contributed liberally toward the succor of the oppressed.

In those days when so many matters of importance touching the subject of slavery had to be adjusted, the advocates of freedom often met for an interchange of views ; and Mr. Ray's home became, on several occasions, the scene of such gatherings, where Lewis Tappan, Simeon S. Jocelyn, Joseph Sturge, the celebrated English philanthropist, and others discussed with great earnestness the inner workings of that grand moral conflict.

The ardor that fired the spirits of the noble band of men and women called Abolitionists could but be further enkindled by a sight of those in bondage whom they sought to liberate, and it is in this connection that the following quotation appears. In the course of one of

Mr. Ray's letters to *The Colored American*, detailing a trip on the Ohio River, occurs this passage, which speaks for itself :

"Soon after this we were abreast a farmhouse on the Virginia side, a very dull looking stone building, and the land about it exceedingly barren. I espied a colored female coming down from the house with two pails, toward the river—the first I had seen since we entered Virginia, for I narrowly watched every house. On seeing her, said I to myself, 'There is undoubtedly a slave;' her every appearance indicated it. This was the first time I had ever seen a slave, actually, to all intents, in slavery. Oh! the emotion that moved my breast, the yearnings of heart that went out after her welfare! Oh! the horror that entered into my soul, the indignation that followed against the system! Thought I, 'If such be my feelings on seeing one, perhaps as well-treated as can be, what must they be upon seeing a harem of them; and thought I also, 'How can men go South and look upon human beings and return and make a single apology; how is it they can return but with indignation against the system and with pity for the victims!'"

Portions of letters are here inserted as appropriate in their relation to the topic under consideration. The gratitude of one whom Mr. Ray had helped to freedom is thus expressed :

"I speak the truth when I say that I am at a lack for language to express the gratitude of my heart for your kindness to my daughter; and the great interest you have taken in her welfare."

And to this daughter her mother writes :

"It affords me great joy to have it in my power to inform you that, through the great kindness of Mr. Ray, I have been able to obtain information respecting you, and through him to address you a letter. My beloved daughter, I hope you will never forget the kindness of Mr. Ray and his family to you."

As another tribute to his devotion to the cause of liberty, a stranger in Kingston, Jamaica, thus writes :

"KINGSTON, JAMAICA, Nov. 27, 1840.

"REV. C. B. RAY.

"*My Dear Sir :*

" . . . I assure you I am not a little proud to observe with what boiling zeal and talent you continue to advocate the noble and glorious cause you have undertaken to espouse. God in His infinite wisdom grant you health and strength to maintain the position which you so fearlessly occupy. In whatever way I can be of service to you, I shall feel a particular pleasure in serving one whose life appears to be so devoted to the cause of the oppressed."

Again another extract of the same nature :

“ OFFICE NATIONAL ERA, }
“ WASHINGTON, D. C., June 3, 1856. }

“ REV. C. B. RAY.

“ *Dear Sir :* It was with feelings of great emotion I received Mr. Beecher’s telegram and also your letter and the accounts as published in the New York papers. You have done nobly and your reward must be in a happy consciousness of having done a good deed. I feel under great obligations to you and Mr. Beecher for the interest you have manifested in Sarah’s case.”

From Columbus, Ohio, comes a gratifying evidence of the trust reposed in Mr. Ray and the high esteem in which he was held :

“ COLUMBUS, OHIO, Nov. 25, 1845.

“ REV. CHARLES B. RAY.

“ *Dear Sir :* Your devotion to the cause of liberty and the confidence I cherish in your willingness to persevere, together with your well-known eminent abilities, have induced me to address you this note, from which you will learn that we are about resuming the publication of *The Disfranchised American*, and to ask the favor of contributions from your able pen upon such topics as you deem most proper.”

Ever zealous in the cause as was Mr. Ray, he could but regard with admiration those great spirits that devoted their best powers in the very flush and enthusiasm of youth to the up-

rooting of the evil that darkened American civilization ; to him William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and Charles Sumner were cherished models of nobility of soul. Of Mr. Sumner, who so often lifted up his voice in the Senate to ameliorate the wrongs of the colored race, Mr. Ray speaks thus, in an address delivered just after the death of the illustrious Senator :

“ Charles Sumner was great in his love of liberty and justice, great in his devotion to the interests and freedom of an injured race. If my memory serves me correctly, excepting his Fourth of July oration in Boston, in 1844—which was really the first public effort indicating his sentiments on the great questions of Freedom and Peace—Mr. Sumner may be said to have commenced his public career in defense of the rights of *our* race ; and this was in his native city, where he was solicited to appear before the Board of Education, or the proper authorities in the matter, to defend the rights of the colored people of Boston, to equal school privileges with other citizens ; in which effort he triumphed. . . . I shall never forget that great gathering of the people in May, 1855, in this city—a gathering made up in good part of a class never before seen at an anti-slavery meeting, but who now came to listen to Mr. Sumner. The meeting was under the auspices of a company of gentlemen of the Free Soil

party and was presided over by the late lamented Judge William Jay. Nor can I ever forget the breathless silence, with now and then a burst of applause, with which that great assembly listened to Mr. Sumner, then in the vigor and beauty of his youth, who for three hours addressed them upon the 'Grandeur of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise.' I felt as I left the meeting that the current thereof had sped us on twenty years nearer the day and the doom of slavery !"

In reviewing Mr. Ray's connection with the great movements organized for the purpose of effecting the liberty of the enslaved, notice must be called to The Vigilance Committee, the main features of which are given in the accompanying extract :

"The New York Committee of Vigilance is a voluntary association of thirteen men (white and colored) of the city of New York. Its object is to institute legal investigations in defense in the case of any colored person who may be arrested upon pretense of being an escaping slave. It is proper here to say that the free colored people of this city are liable to be so arrested, and some have been, formerly, and are now enduring the horrors of slavery simply because they were hurried away without legal investigation into their case. But in the case of the arrest of a real slave, we make it our business to give him legal defense and, if

possible, to thwart his pursuers, as has been done in many cases. But our first and practical business is, to take charge of all the escaping slaves who may either be sent to us or may try to find us, and to seek out all who may come within our notice, to clothe them if need be, and to hurry them away with the least possible delay and the greatest speed to a land of safety, paying their passages and giving them letters of introduction to other friends of the cause in other sections of the country, and thus in the speediest manner, placing them where the slave pursuer can neither find nor molest them, and where they can be free."

In order to give an adequate idea of the dire distress that prompted such a mode of relief, and also some of the good it effected, the following quotation is likewise made :

"Many thousands every year, worn down by excessive toil and cruelty, attempt to escape to a place where they may enjoy some respite from their sufferings. They flee to the woods and often hide in dens and caves of the earth ; of these the greater part are hunted down by bloodhounds, or rifle-hunting parties, who turn out to negro-hunts as other huntsmen go in pursuit of wild beasts. Many who escape the dogs and hunters die of cold and hunger in the forests, or fall a prey to wild beasts, and some, pressing through all these dangers, arrive in the free States, where formerly the minions of the slaveholders seized them and hurried them

back to bondage for a paltry reward ; but where now the Vigilance Committee stands ready to shield and place them beyond the reach of the pursuer. Need we wonder, then, that men will break away from such misery, will expose themselves to fatigue and hunger, and even to death, rather than wear out a wretched life of bondage? Stimulated by the hope of liberty, and in many instances knowing that we are ready to receive and aid them in their flight, they come from the most distant parts, by sea and by land, across the wild prairies, over mountains, through the forests and rivers, and cast themselves upon our care."

In 1850, fifteen years after the formation of the Vigilance Committee of the city of New York, of which Rev. Theodore S. Wright was president, the New York State Vigilance Committee was formed, its plan and object being similar to those of the more local organization. Of this new association, Gerrit Smith was President, and Mr. Ray, a member of the Executive Board, and also Corresponding Secretary—an office he had held in the older society. A call for funds in a time of need, which gives an insight into the work accomplished, was issued by the Executive Board of the State Committee, after this wise :

"NEW YORK CITY, 1849.

"DEAR FRIENDS :

. . . "We wish to call your special atten-

tion to the character and objects of our organization. We address you personally, and with confidence, knowing your interest in the cause of humanity, in all its varied struggles and aspects. With us you have consecrated your sympathies to the slave and to those who are bound to his destiny by the prejudices and false customs of society. With the general design of our Committee you are no doubt familiar. Its labors have been neither inconsiderable, nor wholly concealed from public observation. It has afforded succor and guidance to hundreds of trembling and needy fugitive bondmen, according to its ability : by them and their now happy families, its works of commiseration and charity will not soon be forgotten.

“Within fifteen months past more than four hundred persons, escaped from slavery, have arrived in this city, to claim the attention of our Committee. They have been received, counseled and provided for, as fully as our means and circumstances would permit. In the care of so many helpless strangers, you can understand how a constant and inexorable demand has been made upon our anxieties, our labors, and our funds, of which a large proportion has been contributed by friends residing in this city. You will perceive that just in proportion as the principles of freedom are agitated in this land in one form and another, the slaves will be prompted to flee from their prison house ; and they are coming to us in rapidly augmenting numbers. Every month, every week, is bringing new labors and responsibilities on their account.

“ We are also called upon to contemplate the wrongs of the colored man, at a new angle of observation. In numerous instances persons are held in slavery, *illegally*, and under false pretenses, when a comparatively small expenditure of effort and money, judiciously made, would secure their freedom. Several highly interesting cases of this nature have been pressed upon our attention.

“ In view of these facts we appeal to you to aid us ; first, by informing us of any suitable neighborhood whither fugitive slaves may be sent ; and second, by forwarding to us a contribution from your own purse, and such of your neighbors and friends as you can interest in this matter, by a distinct representation of our objects, and their imperative claims on the professed friends of humanity. Will you not gladly afford us the means, according to your ability, to prosecute this work with vigor and effect ? We expect an early response from you, alike refreshing to your own soul and to ours.

“ Signed in behalf of the Executive Board,

“ WM. HARNED,	} <i>Acting</i>	
“ CHARLES B. RAY,		} <i>Committee.”</i>
“ ANDREW LESTER,		

As the responsibility of the correspondence devolved upon Mr. Ray, the Secretary, he became the recipient of many letters, not alone from the defenders of freedom in the United States, but also from a host of humane and

liberty-loving British subjects, none appearing more interested than they in the vital question then agitating this country. Were it deemed necessary to append portions of the correspondence of the latter, to illustrate their sympathetic zeal, many passages might be given exhibiting the hearty co-operation of those great-souled friends of the cause, across the water.

An indispensable auxiliary to the work of the Vigilance Committee was the Underground Railroad, the following account of which was given, at one time, by Mr. Ray :

“ It is fitting to state some operations of what is properly called the Underground Railroad. This road had its regular lines all the way from Washington ; between Washington and Baltimore a kind of branch. It had its depots in Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Troy, Utica, Syracuse, Oswego and Niagara Falls. New York was a kind of receiving depot, whence we forwarded to Albany, Troy, sometimes to New Bedford and Boston, and occasionally we dropped a few on Long Island, when we considered it safe so to do. When we had parties to forward from here, we would alternate in sending between Albany and Troy, and when we had a large party we would divide between the two cities. We had here, on one occasion, a party of twenty-eight persons of all ages, from the old grandmother to a child of five years. We des-

tinued them for Canada. I secured passage for them in a barge, and Mr. Wright and myself spent the day in providing food, and personally saw them on the barge. I then took the regular passenger boat foot of Cortlandt Street, and started. Arriving in the morning, I reported to the Committee at Albany, and then returned to Troy and gave Brother Garnet notice, and he and I spent the day in visiting friends of the cause there, to raise money to help the party through to Toronto, Canada, *via* Oswego. We succeeded, with what they raised in Albany, in making up the deficiency in my hands, to send them all the way from here with safety."

Connected with the successful work of the Underground Railroad was the escape of one of the members of the Weims family, so well known for the almost unparalleled deliverance from bondage of the entire family, all slaves but one. Their rescue from slavery is here narrated by Mr. Ray :

"One morning at 9 o'clock, there came to see me a man of fine stature, on his way to Boston. He lived in Maryland, near Washington. He had been to Boston on his mission and he had come to interest me in his case ; he succeeded. This was his case : He had a wife, five sons and two daughters, all slaves, sold to traders and the time fixed for their departure South ; but he had obtained from the trader an

extension of time to enable him to raise the money, and he had come to secure my aid. I said to him, 'The sum is too great and the time too short; go right home and try to get further time. You know Stella, your daughter, (he had told me this) is in Mr. Garnet's family in England; go home; I will write this day to him and tell him the case of the family and urge him to lay it before the English people.' He returned to Washington and my letter went by the first mail and had its effect. It was printed in circular form and brought to the notice of distinguished friends, and in a very short time the money began to flow into the hands of Henry Richardson, who was made treasurer, and by him it was transmitted to me, who placed it in the care of a merchant of my intimate acquaintance, to be drawn upon my order. The result was that \$5,000 was secured and forwarded. I immediately opened a correspondence with a gentleman in Washington well known to me, to manage the matter there. I had had correspondence with him in other cases. He managed this matter with wonderful skill, always submitting the final steps to me as to what price to give, etc. Let me here say, however, that the effort made by the husband was to secure the purchase of his wife and youngest child, who had been offered him for \$900, but when he called on me the time allowed him had nearly run out and but a small sum had been obtained. The interview for an extension of time failed, and the wife and five boys had been sent on to Montgomery, Alabama. The

two girls had been left behind still in the hands of the original owners—the elder as nurse with a member of the family. Immediately on receipt of the first draft of £700, notice was sent to my friend and he was instructed to open negotiations for the purchase of the elder girl, Catherine, and as soon as he could see John, the father, negotiations were opened, the girl secured and her freedom made valid.”

Mr. Bigelow, the gentleman managing the matter in Washington, thus gives information of her freedom :

“WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 14, 1853.*

“REV. CHAS. B. RAY.

“*Dear Sir :* I am happy to inform you that this day at twelve o’clock, through the kind interposition of noble-hearted English friends, Catherine Weims ceased to be, by the disgraceful laws of the land, ‘a thing,’ and since that hour has been a free woman !

“She is so recorded at our City Hall. She has this afternoon gone with her father to visit her aunt in the west part of the city, happy enough ! It has been arranged, for many reasons mentioned in another letter, for her to stop for a time in the family of a member of our church, till she *gets used to herself* as a free woman, etc. More particulars hereafter—to-day I am in great haste.”

Mr. Ray proceeds :

“A proposal was suggested for the purchase

of the younger girl but we objected to the price and went no further then. Efforts were next made to ascertain the whereabouts of the rest of the family, and when learned, we opened correspondence for the purchase of the mother and the two younger children, boys. We knew they, being young, could probably be had, but with them we wanted the mother. This effort had got into the papers and to the ears of planters South, who held the mother and children, and who put an enormous price upon them. Negotiations were then opened for the purchase of the mother and two younger boys. We objected to the price. I told Mr. Bigelow to refuse it; he did, and they came down from \$2,100 to \$1,600, delivered in Washington. The mother and children were brought there, free papers duly made, and their freedom secured.

“But I must say a word about the younger girl, the price of whom they held as high as we gave for Catherine. We proposed another method for her freedom and carried it out, in which the mother acted a good part, as she could; we proposed to run her off. I was written to, to know whether a draft for three hundred dollars would be forwarded, conditioned upon the appearance of Ann Maria in my house or hands—this sum being appropriated to compensate the one who should deliver her safely in the North. I answered, of course, in the affirmative.”

The escape of Ann Maria, as proposed by this new plan, can best be explained by the

correspondence between Mr. Ray and Mr. Bigelow in Washington, who—writing according to a method often adopted in those days, in order the more effectually to secure concealment—designates Ann Maria as the parcel sent.

The letter runs thus :

“WASHINGTON, D. C., *Nov.* 17, 1855.

“REV. CHAS. B. RAY.

“*Dear Sir* : . . . I have a friend passing through this city on his way to New York, and I mean to avail myself of his kindness to send to your lady the little parcel she has been so long expecting. You can name it to her, and I now suggest that as soon as you find it convenient, you send me back by express the wrapper and covering in which the valuables are packed, for I have another similar parcel to send, and shall find these things exactly convenient for that purpose. My friend intends to leave here on Monday morning, with his own conveyance, taking it leisurely, and may not reach New York before about Thursday, but of this I shall speak more exactly before I close. I need not suggest to you how anxious I shall be to get the earliest news of the arrival of the package without breakage or injury.”

Also he adds as follows :

“WASHINGTON, D. C., *Nov.* 22, 1855.

“REV. CHAS. B. RAY.

“*Dear Sir* : My last letter will lead you to

expect to see the boy Joe to-day, but it was afterward calculated that he will not arrive till sometime to-morrow. I am requested for the gratification of Joe's mother that you will be pleased on his arrival, and *before he changes his sex*, to have his daguerreotype taken for her use. It will make up a part of the Record."

Mr. Ray's narration continues thus :

"Accordingly, one afternoon upon arriving home I found, sitting on the sofa at my house, a little boy about ten years old in appearance, and looking rather feminine. I knew at once who it was, that it was Ann Maria. Upon her arrival I was to take her to Mr. Tappan, in whose hands the balance of the money was placed. This I did, and the *little boy Joe* was taken to her uncle or to where he could obtain her and finally reached Canada."

We add here extracts from the letters of a lady, Mrs. Anna H. Richardson of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, who, with her husband before mentioned as treasurer there, was deeply interested in the case of the Weims family and through whose influence and efforts much aid was obtained from the friends of freedom in the British realm.

"WESTMORELAND TERRACE, }

"NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, ENG., Dec. 10, 1852. }

"DEAR FRIEND C. B. RAY :

"Thy kind letter of the 18th ult., conveying

the sad intelligence of the departure of the poor captives from Washington, reached us three days since. I avail myself of the first post to say how anxiously we are looking for further particulars. Can it be that those poor girls are gone, and possibly the mother and her youngest child also? Oh, the enormity of this traffic in the flesh and blood of our fellow-creatures! Our personal knowledge of *one* of the sufferers made it come increasingly home to British hearts, and if God grant us grace and strength to continue the conflict, some of us do not mean to rest till the direful iniquity is searched out, in the present instance, to its very core.

“ I think, dear friend, I have already written to thee four times ; there had been time to answer but one of these letters when thou wrote to me on the 18th ult. As the others have come in thou wilt have observed the increasing earnestness of the British public to carry their point, and their fixed determination to rescue the captives. As the present information is not very definite, we defer printing anything about it till more comes in, and we are not even saying much about it to our friends. As soon as ever it is known how the case stands, be very sure, my friend, that British blood will be up, and that there will be one loud continuous shout through the land, that agitations and remonstrances must be set on foot, and that we will not rest till the Weimses are freed. My husband and I had not ventured to expect in an early instance that so much interest could be felt in this case, as it may be considered com-

paratively a common one, without any special atrocious features, but perhaps the masses in this country did not know till *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was in every one's hand, what some of us knew—that these horrible things were of daily occurrence and comparatively a matter of as commonplace frequency as the holding of our own sheep and cattle markets. The British public knows it now and more than this is identifying itself with the present sufferers. The newspapers have voluntarily taken up the theme and it would have been impossible for £1,000 to have been thrown down with greater alacrity. It has not been given in large sums, not with a tone of taunt or defiance, but has come in, in little sums, in hundreds of cases from people of very small means and with a groan of pity—and with a determination for Christ's sake to do the little that the giver could. Filled with this determination, there has been strength of purpose in the giving that will not relax till the object in view is gained. It has been given religiously, tearfully, prayerfully, and though all of us abhor giving money to bad men for the freedom of the bodies and souls of our fellow-creatures, this feeling has been overpowered by the stronger necessity of doing as we would be done by, under similar circumstances.

“But this is a long preface to the practical part of my letter. We must now request thee to summon a few friends together, and we have to ask you, unitedly, to consider the best means for gaining the desired end. Would it be safe for John Weims himself to go and seek after

his children, or have you trustworthy and reliable parties who can do so? As stewards of public money, you will of course kindly guard my dear husband and me against having to lay out the funds that are at our command, lavishly, but everything that is reasonable and manageable we request you to do, also informing us of each particular as, the poor creatures are found, by whom and how they were found, and under what circumstances.

"May the Most High graciously overlook and guide both your effort and our own in carrying forward the proposed search and may the result tend to His glory.

"Sincerely and respectfully thy friend,

"ANNA H. RICHARDSON."

Later, when Mrs. Weims and her children were traced and their freedom secured, as is seen from Mr. Ray's narrative, Mrs. Richardson, being cognizant of that fact, writes thus :

"WESTMORELAND TERRACE,

"NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, ENG., *Oct. 9, 1853.* }

"DEAR FRIEND C. B. RAY :

"I had perfect confidence in your not neglecting this important case and was sure you had good reasons for not proceeding in it more rapidly. . . . It is delightful to think of rescuing one family out of the multitude, but alas! what is this to the mass of suffering victims! We do indeed rejoice for Airay Weims and her two boys to be restored to their home,

and sincerely thank the various parties concerned for the kind care they have taken in the matter."

Again she says on the subject of slavery :

" There is a deep-seated dislike in this country (in many instances amounting to a principle) against giving money to slave-holders for the ransom of our fellow-creatures, but some of us think it is at least as Christian an act to give money to set people free from bondage, as it is to give it to the same slave-holders for the purchase of their slave-grown produce. This one act makes the victim of his oppression unspeakably happy ; the other adds to the weight of his chains."

In connection with the operations of the Underground Railroad numerous cases might be cited, but a few will suffice as illustrative of the many. The following incident has often been told in Mr. Ray's family. One summer morning, a loud rap with the knocker at the front door arrested the attention, and the door being opened, a man entered, who, after asking, " Does the Rev. Mr. Ray live here ? " and receiving an affirmative answer, whistled as a signal to attract the notice of his comrades, then cried out, " Come on, boys ! " and forthwith fourteen men in all entered, quite alarming the inmates of the house on seeing such a train

of fugitives. One of them, a young man—sad to relate—had been lost in the great city and his companions knew not where to direct their steps to find him.

We give two other noteworthy cases which have a record in the family annals. A man, a fugitive slave, of fine bearing and address, seeking flight to a land of safety, was concealed for six weeks under the shelter of the roof that had sheltered so many. Here he played with one of the children, and even when—some years later, upon his return from England, a free man—he presented each of the little ones with a token of gratitude, his former youthful playmate little dreamed that her grown-up friend of other days had been, at the time of his stay in the family, a prisoner, but awaiting the favorable moment to set out for some haven of the enslaved.

The other was this: A young girl, sixteen years of age, very interesting in demeanor, and although a slave, possessed of considerable knowledge, had been aided in escaping from bondage by the efforts of a mother who had previously purchased her own freedom. The latter had received the assurance from her former owner that she might also purchase her daughter; but he violated his pledge and the mother deemed it best to endeavor to send her

child from the land of slavery at the first opportunity. This she did, and the daughter, under a very romantic name which she had assumed, the better to avoid notice, succeeded in reaching the North and was intrusted to Mr. Ray's care. She remained three weeks in his family, so endearing herself to all that the parting was not without tears ; from there she went to a permanent home which Mr. Ray had secured for her, farther East, and where her mother afterward joined her. One little feature of this narrative deserves especial mention. She assured her protectors that she was in no fear of pursuit from her late owners, as they, being originally Eastern people, would be ashamed to have it known that they owned slaves. Some years later she married and became a highly respected member of the community in which she lived. The mother's letter of gratitude has already been given in this volume.

Thus, in such cases as the above, Mr. Ray continued his untiring efforts to aid in striking the chains from the enslaved as long as the bane of slavery rested on this fair land ; and after the Emancipation Proclamation had removed the necessity for further labor in that direction, he could well join in the pæans of victory at the downfall of that iniquitous system !

III.

IN July, 1863, occurred the great riot in New York which left so many colored families destitute. Of the work that Mr. Ray rendered during this period, we give the following account from his Annual Report as City Missionary :

“But the occurrence which especially deserves notice at our hands in this report is the riots of July last. This was an outbreak aimed as well at the life of the colored population as it was at the life of the government. In the attempt to block the wheels of the government, the perpetrators thirsted for the life of our people ; and during those three days especially, the lives of this harmless class seemed more in the hands of those fiends in human shape than was the property of the citizens at their mercy ; for while they met the white citizen and demanded the property about his person, they demanded of the colored citizen, as they met him, his life. This was a week which scarcely has a parallel in this or any other country, unless it were in the Sepoy massacre in India. It was for a brief time the reign of an infatuated mob—the Reign of Terror. Seldom has a people been so hunted and driven in all sections of the city, and so filled with consternation and dread

as were our people during those scenes ; and it extended also as well in the vicinity as it did here. It is a wonder, exposed and hunted as they were, that more lives were not taken. As it was, several of them fell victims to this infuriated mob. But where they escaped with their lives, their household property did not. Nearly one thousand persons, most of them heads of families, lost all they had, excepting what they took with them in their flight, or had deposited elsewhere. And it is a disgrace to the city, not only that such scenes should be enacted therein, but because the authorities have neglected or refused to compensate them for their loss, as bound to do by law. It has seemed to me that they have strained a point, not to be just toward these sufferers, but to be unjust. Could they have witnessed the sufferings I have witnessed during the winter past, for the want of this act of justice toward them, they must have had hearts of stone not to award to them the amount to make good their losses. I must enter my convictions here, from my acquaintance with many of these claimants and their circumstances, that instead of having made an exorbitant claim for losses sustained, they were, so far as they came under my own observation, just and reasonable ; the value of articles lost laid at about half the cost of new, and much below their worth to them.

“It is proper that I should make mention of this riot in this report, from the effect it had upon my work as pastor and missionary. And as it affected me in my work, so it affected all

our pastors. While it broke up the homes of our people for a time, and scattered them indiscriminately and closed our schools, so it also closed our churches and for several weeks they were not opened.

"This week of terror increased rather than diminished our missionary work, not only to hunt up our flock and bring them together again, but to look after the people generally. Many of them were not only broken up in their homes and despoiled of their goods, but deprived, for a time, of their usual employment and reduced to want. In view of this it is well known that the Christian merchants of this city came nobly forward in this time of need, and raised \$50,000 for our relief. This large sum had to be disbursed to relieve those who were needy and deserving, and several of our clergymen, myself among the number, whose services were thought indispensable, were called in to assist in distributing this noble charity. As it was found necessary, after the first applications for aid, that the applicants with whom we were not entirely familiar should be visited where they had found a home, this opened up a new phase of missionary work, and carried us to all parts of the city and among all classes of the people ; and these visits, religiously used as they were, had as well their proper moral effect as they rendered pecuniary aid.

"But when we had concluded our work with the Relief Committee, our missionary work with these still suffering people was not done ; with some of them it had just begun. Their

claims for household goods were still unpaid, and they were destitute of everything needful for use and comfort. None know, excepting those who have witnessed it, the extent of the suffering among them, from the loss of their goods and clothing. I have consequently been sought by many of them through the winter, for advice in relation to their claims, and to render them assistance or secure aid for them, all of which I was happy to do, as best I could. This I have felt to be proper missionary work, and I have reason to know that good has been the result."

Mr. Ray always manifested a keen interest in the affairs of the government, and was a staunch Republican, entering heartily into all questions affecting the welfare of the country. When the great right of suffrage was accorded to his race, none rejoiced more than he that now the colored citizen was truly a man under the law; and thenceforth, he uniformly endeavored to impart the knowledge of an intelligent use of the franchise to those whose limited experience in such matters might lead them to err in judgment. We give here his own views of the subject, as written by him at the time of the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

"Upon the occurrence in the providence of God, of great events which secure personal po-

litical rights to a whole race; therefore their future progress and well-being, such become special occasions to exclaim : 'Oh ! give thanks unto the Lord !' During the progress and since the termination of the late Rebellion, several acts of government brought about great events which involved the happiness and welfare of the colored race of America ; such were the Emancipation Proclamation, which proclaimed liberty to this race throughout the land, and the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which made that liberty irrevocable.

" But great as were these events in securing personal freedom to millions of mankind, yet this work was incomplete until it should have secured and made inviolate equal political as well as civil rights to them throughout the country, a work no less demanded for the country than due to them. The nation would not have completed the fabric of government which it commenced to build on the principles enunciated in 1776, as the chief corner-stone of the government, namely : 'All men are created free and equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,' etc., until it should have made all equal before the law. This the government has just done by ingrafting into the Constitution, as a part thereof, the Article known as the Fifteenth Amendment. *This* is the work demanded by the country as well as due to humanity. I hardly need refer as to how this great consummation has been regarded as a jubilee, not alone by those whose political *status* has been so justly changed thereby—and

everywhere in all the land they have held such demonstrations as scarcely any class ever held before—but almost the whole people have alike rejoiced, recognizing the hand of God therein, and rendering thanksgiving to Him therefor.

“The simply putting the ballot in the hands of this hitherto disfranchised class is not alone the good to result from this act of justice, too long delayed ; it is the moral effect directly operating upon the mind that is to be the greater. Here is the disfranchised citizen, representing a large class of people bereft of all political power, denied political rights, without political influence, therefore considered of little account by the body politic, and treated accordingly. This fact, which meets him at every turn in life, depresses his hopes, his ambition, his spirits. He feels himself deprived of the power of self-protection ; and to command consideration, is too much a cipher among men, and at their mercy. This is an oppression which none can realize save he who feels it. But now that the cause of this is removed, the natural effects that followed have gone therewith, and a remarkable change comes over the mind. It is like a bird let out of his cage ; the pressure is taken off, the spirit is free. This is a change that has come over a class of the people numbered by the millions. They are not only brought into a new political *status*, a new relation to the government, but into a new life ; looking upon men and things through other mediums, with corresponding effects and feelings which are

moral feelings and effects. These are to soften the asperities of the mind, to make it more catholic toward all men, and to produce a broader humanity. The people thus benefited are made to feel, too, their own manhood, and to realize it as never before, being brought up more toward where they should be in the scale of existence, and into a kindlier fellowship with their fellow-men. The joy with which everywhere this act has been received, shows not only the light in which it was accepted as an act of justice, but the cheerful change and state it produced. The result is a national gain of good feeling. We have a happier nation than before. Surely, if such are among the moral results growing out of the passage of this act, with the long train of fruits to follow, they will more than repay for the justice done.

“It need hardly be asked what use will be made of this boon. One thing is certain, it will be used. A people will not for generations earnestly long, labor, and pray for a right, and then when obtained neglect its use. As to how it will be used, whether always rightly and for the highest good, and never meanly, will depend not upon circumstances—such are never to be taken into account where right or wrong is concerned—but upon the instruction given, the proper influence brought to bear, and the character of the individual. We do not claim for the whole of this class entire purity of character and loftiness of principle as the controlling motive by which they are governed in the exercise of this right. We claim to be no better than the

average of mankind, and to be no worse. One thing is very certain, this boon will never be exercised in the work of oppression, either of ourselves or of any other class. We know too well the woes of oppression, have drunk too long and too deeply the dregs thereof, ever to inflict those woes upon others; have endured too long the evils of disfranchisement to afflict others therewith; because we have suffered ourselves, we have no disposition to retaliate.

“As a people, we have been so long proscribed and made to suffer so much from the exercise of the franchise in other hands that, while we do not set down aught in malice or retaliate, we ought, nevertheless, so to exercise the franchise as to regain, as best we may, something at least that we have lost.

“We are often met with the assertion that, now that slavery, the bane of the colored man, is abolished, the franchise extended to him, and he therefore made an equal before the law, that the work for him in this country is done; nothing more need he claim. We admit that so far as his citizenship is concerned, his civil and political rights—things for which for a generation he has contended—this work is done; but while this revolution tends to produce happy moral effects and to be followed by kindred fruits, it is not itself a moral revolution that enlightens and changes the moral state and condition, but a political revolution that has changed the relationship of a race to one another, to the government, and to the people at large; that

has imposed upon it new duties and placed it under greater responsibilities that are to be met intelligently, conscientiously, and in honor for the public good. Many who have come into this new relation are prepared so to discharge these duties. The larger portion, doubtless, are not, and need instruction and advice ; a new and great work is therefore presented to be done, and, so far from the work in behalf of this class having been completed, it has, in some new and important aspects, just begun.

“ For one, I most deeply feel the responsibilities of this new situation, and I am not alone among my brethren. Here now we are, millions strong, in full possession of the rights of our manhood in common with the whole American people, having attained to all we have claimed as of right ours, and to the deprivation of which we have justly attributed much that was depressing, and in some respects, demoralizing in our condition. Now the whole thing is changed ; and shall a corresponding change ensue in our entire condition ? The matter seems now to be entirely in our own hands, the responsibility at our own doors. Will we so use the facilities of our new situation as alike to do us credit and produce a great moral change over the whole aspect of things hitherto peculiar in our condition ; or will we rush into political life, and unscrupulously use our political power for position and become corrupted, as too many do ? We hope for better things.

“ If now, our newly enfranchised brethren shall use the franchise scrupulously and in good

conscience, how greatly it will redound to the credit, honor and elevation of the race, and secure the esteem and respect of mankind! As to whether and how far the masses not so well enlightened will do this, may depend much, perhaps, upon those among us who are called to be teachers of the people and who are enlightened upon questions of right and duty—upon the position we take and the influence we endeavor to exert. In view of this, it is that I feel so deeply the responsibility of our new situation.”

In 1879, at the time of the great exodus to Kansas, when numbers, despairing of success in their new homes, came to New York on their way to Liberia, Mr. Ray, manifesting his wonted interest in the oppressed, was one among the ministers of this city who met to discuss the measures to be adopted for the aid of this class of sufferers; and he spent day after day with his co-laborers working for the relief, protection and settlement in homes of this large body of people, so misused and cheated in the homes of their nativity, and fleeing from them to a promised refuge. He never ceased to give earnest support to any great public measure designed to elevate his race; and not only in this way did he serve the people, but private matters were often brought to him for adjustment, his natural grasp of the legal points of the subject

enabling him to reach the solution of many a seemingly entangled situation.

In this brief sketch, his life has been presented mainly through a glance at the various enterprises which he helped to further by a use of his time and talents ; for the actuating motives that govern mankind, the impulses that lead to effort, can best be learned through deeds —their finest fruitage. Having at heart lofty aims and pursuits, he was a serious man, yet none could enjoy more than he an hour of social intercourse with congenial friends ; very forgiving, so far as almost to forget that an injury had been done him, ever patient with those who sought his assistance, he was kind to all who came to unfold a tale of sorrow. He lived to see his race enjoying the blessings of that freedom to which he had consecrated his best days ; but while thus engaged in the arena of struggle for right and contest against wrong, he did not allow the exhilarating tumult of the warfare to distract him from the milder music of the fireside, nor prize the less the amenities of a well-regulated home, ever taking a calm delight in quiet household joys. A dutiful son faithfully ministering to the wants of his aged mother in her widowhood, a thoughtful husband, who shielded from every care, a fond and indulgent father, who took great pride in his chil-

dren, he ever found a solace from the responsibilities of a busy life in the warm affection of a devoted family.

He continued his activity nearly up to the last, retaining his excellent memory and other faculties unimpaired, and after a summer of feeble health, he passed suddenly, yet peacefully, to the blessed fulfillment of a better world, on Sunday morning, August 15, 1886.

A dear friend, speaking of his death, quotes Mr. Spurgeon's beautifully effective words : "Sudden death is sudden glory!" and of his last hours these lines of the well-known hymn sung at his funeral seem singularly appropriate :

" His spirit with a bound
Left its encumbering clay ! "

to be, according to Christ's precious promise, numbered among those of whom it is said in words of sublime significance :

" These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple : and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed

them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

He was buried from his late residence, on Thursday, August 19. Says another friend who had known him long and well :

"His funeral was one of the most impressive I ever attended."

We close this sketch "in memoriam" with the following extract from *The New York Freeman* :

"The obsequies of the Rev. Charles B. Ray were held at his late residence on Thursday morning, 19th inst. As his life was modest, so was his funeral. But a few of his class remained to do him honor, but few as they were they were there. Rev. A. N. Freeman, of Siloam Church, Brooklyn, who is quite feeble and advanced in years, pronounced the eulogy. They had been close friends in the ministry, and not a long time ago, Mr. Ray called to see him and exchanges were made, that whoever should pass to reward first, the one left should pronounce the benediction for the life-work of the other. It had fallen to his lot, and he announced the beautiful and eloquent poetic verse : 'Servant of God, well done !' which the audience sang. Then Rev. S. B. Halliday, of Plymouth Church, delivered a magnificent and touching tribute to Mr. Ray's life.

He said that the earlier men of this stripe were nearly all gone to rest, that he could not refrain from being present and attesting his love and respect for the deceased—an earnest, faithful soldier of Christ, a champion of the rights of his race, a co-worker in all that was good and elevating in man. Mr. Halliday said that this was a house of rejoicing, and we should not feel sad at death's intervening, as it took us to a better and holier sphere; and he expected soon to meet, in that holy state, the friend who had just gone a step ahead. Revs. Horton and Rawlins attested their love for him in prayer and eulogy, while Dr. Ward of *The Independent* gave a brief sketch of his make-up as a man, his work and active life; and lastly said that he was a man whom he loved, and that he was better known by his private, unassuming work than by loud acclaim.

“‘Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep!’ was sung, and the last look taken of one of the best of our pioneer anti-slavery leaders. Many of his white friends in the ministry and anti-slavery work were present, among them a nephew of Lewis Tappan. The interment took place at Cypress Hills.”

It was about the year 1832, when I first became acquainted with the Rev. Charles B. Ray, on his first visit to the city of New York, and not finding his brother-in-law at his place of business, he called upon me and wished to know if I could give him any information of his sister, or where the family resided. I gave him the information, telling him that the family resided at Manhattanville, a few miles out of the city.

I then took him to see Rev. Theodore S. Wright, who lived at that time in Elm Street, and was the pastor of the Colored Presbyterian Church, then situated at the corner of William and Frankfort streets.

Mr. Wright, after conversing with him a while, became very much interested in him and from that time, like David and Jonathan, they became fast friends, and this friendship lasted up to the time of Mr. Wright's death.

Mr. Ray was a hard worker, a great thinker, and an able preacher.

Soon after coming to this city he became deeply interested in the anti-slavery cause; and I wish that I could tell of all the great

work he did in aiding the fleeing bondman, and also for the downfall of slavery. His whole soul was in the work ; no place was too sacred, nor any day too holy for him to do or speak for those who could not, or dared not speak for themselves. But his work is done, and he has gone to his reward.

I think that the last time I saw him in life was about two years ago, when I lay upon my sick-bed with little prospect of recovery. He stayed with me quite a while, and after talking of the present and of the past, and offering up a fervent prayer to God, he left and I felt that Brother Ray was that same true, kind, and Christian friend I had found him to be in years past and gone.

And it gives me pleasure to add that during the fifty-five years of our acquaintance, we had always been on the most intimate terms ; and I little thought that he would be called to leave us so soon, and that it would devolve upon me to attend his funeral.

But God's ways are not as our ways.

AMOS N. FREEMAN.

IMPRESSIONS AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH
THE LIFE OF REV. CHARLES B. RAY.

BY MRS. C. S. BROWN SPEAR.

I HAD known him personally over forty years. He ever seemed to me in the spirit and attitude of the early disciple, when it was said, "The Master calleth for thee." "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" There was no hesitation. He seemed to live under the Divine influence continually; every enterprise involving the interests of mankind he embraced with a loving and willing heart. His moral status was such that he seemed naturally inclined to do right. His disposition was such, that his mind was evenly balanced, and not subject to the perturbations so often incident to those less favored with that quiet and calm sense of duty that he possessed.

When I first knew him, in the city of New York in the spring of '43, he was Corresponding Secretary of a Committee of Vigilance in the escape and protection of fugitive slaves. When Mr. Brown and myself were about to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony, Mr. Brown said, "Whom shall we have to perform the ceremony?" He made mention of a number of clergymen of this city, and the question

was asked by myself with regard to each one, "Is he an Abolitionist?" And he as often said, "*No!*" At last he said, "Why not have Mr. Ray?" I readily assented, and so I felt approved and blessed in thus being united by this godly man, having been co-workers in the glorious cause of emancipation and in aiding fugitives to a land of freedom! I met him in convention on the fiftieth anniversary of our cause in this city. It was a glorious occasion!

During our sojourn in New York State after our marriage, my husband (Rev. Abel Brown) was connected with the Vigilance Committee of New York, being the "forwarding merchant" for this species of property in Albany where his office was located, and in constant communication with Mr. Ray and others. One day on his return from a meeting of the committee in this city, he said:

"Oh, Catharine, we have had one of the finest specimens I have ever seen. The man is a musician; he plays the violin nearly as well as your brother James, and you will think so when you hear him."

Soon after, Mr. Brown took him with us to a convention at Canandaigua. He played at my solicitation in the cars, while stopping at Utica, and he was indeed truly artistic. He had played

at a theater in one of the cities at the South and was also a leader of a band of musicians. One being a white man, he took him for his master and thus escaped. He improvised accompaniments to my anti-slavery songs. He had thrown away his horn from fear of detection. He was nearly a white man and this helped him in his pursuit of freedom! Many interesting facts of a novel character, but nevertheless true, might be given of escaped fugitives, inasmuch as "Truth is stranger than fiction."

An extremely interesting case occurred, concerning a fugitive forwarded by Mr. Ray to Albany, care of Mr. Abel Brown. He arrived one morning during the absence of Mr. Brown, and was sheltered and cared for by his companion in labors three days, constantly in dread of being taken by his pursuers! The account of himself as a slave and of his journey on his way to a land of freedom was so *peculiar*, that Mrs. B. wished to retain him. Mr. Brown, in the meantime, had found a place near Lake Champlain for this class of human beings, to which the fugitive was immediately conveyed. He was very intelligent, could read and write, and by the aid of his own pass had effected his escape. Although often accosted as a runaway, he deliberately showed them his

"Ticket of Leave," that proved sufficient. He had been three months on his way from Virginia, always traveled in the daytime, and slept in grave-yards at night. "The best place in the world, because there they would not look for me," he said. Mr. Brown wrote for his wife. She came all the way with a little scrap of paper with the words, "Abel Brown, Albany." (She was a free woman.) After keeping her a week, she was sent for by the friends of her "dear William," and conveyed to his place of safety. On her arrival both were so much affected that neither could speak for some time, when she gave burst to a flood of tears, and the fountain of her lips was unsealed. They were provided by friends with a home of their own whence they repaired, and lived happily together in the full tide of domestic happiness, never before experienced while in a land of slavery.

No longer is "Slavery the corner-stone of our Republican Government," as stated by Calhoun. It is now conceded that the Declaration of Independence, including the equality of rights and constitutional freedom, is the basis of our Republican Institutions

OBSEQUIES.

ON the event of the death of Mr. Ray, that Christian philanthropist, I attended the funeral. I never saw a more sweet and lovely expression on the face of the dead than on his.

The services were simple and appropriate, in view of a life devoted to the service of God and the calls of humanity—and all was peace!

My acquaintance with Mr. Ray began in 1837, or 1838, when he was introduced to me as among the foremost colored men of his generation in the city of New York. His manners were pleasing, his pretensions modest, and his devotion to the anti-slavery cause ardent and self-sacrificing. Some may say in their haste that boldness in that cause on the part of a colored man was a matter of course and hardly worthy of praise. But in those days it was not so. The mass of colored men were so dependent, in one way and another, upon the whites, that it required the highest courage on their part openly to espouse the cause of their enslaved brethren and identify themselves openly with the Abolitionists. What wonder if some of them were timid, hesitating, cautious, or even silent where speech would have been likely to deprive them of an opportunity to earn bread for their children. A dark skin, no more than a white one, is the necessary badge either of courage or cowardice. But Mr. Ray was a man of too much humanity to turn his back upon the slaves, or to refuse to share the unpopularity, odium, and personal danger to which the early Abolitionists were exposed.

My residence in those days having been in Boston, while Mr. Ray lived in New York, we met but rarely, save in the larger anti-slavery meetings. I heard of him, however, very frequently, as prominently engaged in aiding slaves to escape from bondage, and as editor of *The Colored American*, a paper which, from its ability and the soundness of its principles, deserved to live, but for which the times were not ripe.

In 1839-40, the Abolitionists, who for nearly a decade of years had been a united and harmonious body, were split in twain by the question, whether women who, being members of the anti-slavery societies and contributors to their funds, should be permitted, when they desired so to do, to speak and vote in their meetings. The question arose in consequence of the activity and great popularity of Angelina and Sarah Grimké, from South Carolina, as lecturers on Slavery, especially in Massachusetts. Many women were thereby stimulated to take a more prominent part in the movement than they had done before, and many of the brethren were moved to encourage them in doing so. On examining the constitutions of the societies they found that in no case was sex made a condition of membership. "Any person" signing the constitution and contrib-

uting to the funds was eligible. Scores of women claimed the rights thus conferred upon them, and the question had to be met. But in truth there *was* no question save that which arose upon purely sectarian grounds, and of which the pro-slavery ministers and churches determined to avail themselves as a means of creating division in the anti-slavery ranks. They thereupon set up the cry that Garrison and his friends were foisting the woman question in its broadest sense upon the anti-slavery movement, thus showing contempt for the authority of the Bible and the established social order. For this alleged reason they called upon orthodox Abolitionists either to vote Garrison down or to secede from the societies under his control. Hints were thrown out that if this were only done, and an anti-slavery society formed in which Garrison should have no visible part, there would be a great flocking to it on the part of the clergy who had so long stood aloof from the cause. At the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in New York, in 1839, the majority voted to recognize women as members ; and, in view of that vote, the presiding officer, in 1840, very properly nominated a woman to serve upon the business committee. This was strenuously opposed, but sanctioned by vote of the

Society ; and then came the split for which the pro-slavery clergy had hoped and planned. The majority, though far from all, of the orthodox Abolitionists seceded.

The colored people of New York very naturally, through their sectarian and religious sympathies, joined in this secession. Their motives I do not question ; but history has shown that they acted unwisely as respects the woman question, and that their hope of thereby winning the clergy and the churches to the support of Abolitionism was without warrant. These men and these bodies liked anti-slavery no whit better with Garrison left out than with him at the front. It was Abolitionism pure and simple that repelled them. Mr. Lewis Tappan, the leader of the secession, in his *Life* of his brother Arthur, testifies that they "kept aloof as well from the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society as they did from the American Society, of which Mr. Garrison was the head." Thus nothing was gained, while great harm was done by the division. The seceders became less exacting in respect to the pro-slavery clergy and the churches, and gave them great comfort by turning the agitation more and more into political channels.

Mr. Ray, following the strong currents of anti-slavery opinion immediately around him,

naturally united with the seceders ; but justice requires me to say that I believe he did not in any degree share the hostility to Garrison manifested by many others. He still regarded him as the founder and moral leader of the anti-slavery movement, and, in spite of all differences, respected and loved him as such. He attended the Garrisonian meetings as faithfully as before, though taking a less active part in them ; and when, some years before the war, the Society formed by the seceders ceased to have any existence, his first love for the o'd Society seemed to be renewed. He met his former Garrisonian associates with his old friendliness, and greatly rejoiced in their efforts to keep up the moral agitation to the very end of the conflict. In these later years I met him frequently, and was much impressed by his non-partisan spirit, his hearty appreciation of every earnest effort in behalf of the good cause, and the gentleness by which he was always characterized. There was in him none of that acidity of character which needed the softening influences of old age to remove. He died, as he had lived, the lover of humanity, the devoted friend of the race with which he was allied by ties of blood, and for whose advancement he had so long and so faithfully labored.

OLIVER JOHNSON.

NEW YORK, *April* 16, 1887.

THE following appeared in *The Independent* of August 26, 1886, from the pen of Rev. Wm. Hayes Ward, D.D., a sincere friend of Mr. Ray :

“The Rev. Charles B. Ray, who died in this city last week, in his seventy-ninth year, was one of the most notable colored men of his day. He came of old and pure Massachusetts stock, and we doubt if a drop of other than most primitive Massachusetts blood ran in his veins. He was born in Falmouth, on Cape Cod ; and he used to boast that the blood of three races—the aboriginal Indian, the English white settler, and the first negroes of New England—was mingled in his veins, and so mingled that he would have to go back three or four generations to find an ancestor of unmixed blood. He was a living disproof of the silly theory that the mixture of blood deteriorates all its elements. He was, also, a connecting link with the great history of anti-slavery. He had lived fifty-six years in New York, and was one of those who, with Lewis Tappan, organized in those old days a Congregational church, designed equally to welcome all races.

His memory was full of facts and incidents of all the early Abolitionists, and he would talk of them always with great enthusiasm. His life was devoted to the cause of those of his race—we mean the negro fraction of it—and for them he suffered much. He was a member of the Manhattan Congregational Association, several of whose members attended his funeral, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Freeman, a colored clergyman who had known him ever since he first came to this city. He leaves a widow and three daughters, two of whom are teachers in our public schools."

IN MEMORIAM.

REV. CHARLES B. RAY.

AT a meeting of the New York African Society for Mutual Relief, held on Monday evening, December 13, 1886, at its meeting hall, corner Broadway and Thirteenth Street, the report of a committee, appointed at a previous meeting to draft a suitable expression of grief of the Society in the demise of the Rev. Charles B. Ray, and of condolence with the afflicted family of the deceased, was made, and the following expressions were unanimously adopted :

“WHEREAS, The Great Ruler of the Universe, in His infinite wisdom, has removed from our midst one of the most pre-eminent of our co-workers, a man whose long and faithful membership—having during that time been intrusted for a period with the responsibility of the highest office in the gift of its members—makes it fitting that we record our appreciation of his worth ; therefore

“*Resolved*, That in the demise of the Rev. Charles B. Ray, this Society condoles with the

family of the deceased in their bereavement and sincerely unites in appreciation of his worth as an honorable citizen, a kind and affectionate parent, the endeared companion, and as an exemplary Christian minister, whose life and good deeds are remembered by all who knew him; whose influence and labors strengthened the cords of humanity and promoted the cause of universal liberty.

“*Resolved*, That a copy of the Preamble and Resolutions, herein contained, be spread upon the Minutes of this meeting, and a copy of the same, signed by our President and Recording Secretary, be tendered to the family of the deceased.

“ E. V. C. EATO, *President*.

“ FRANCIS E. BARREAU,

“ *Recording Secretary*.”

Extract from Records of Meeting of Manhattan Congregational Association, held January 26, 1887:

"WHEREAS, in the Providence of God, one of our number, the Rev. Charles B. Ray, was removed from us by death, in the city of New York, August 15, 1886, it was

"*Voted*, That the following Minute be adopted, and a copy thereof be forwarded to our deceased brother's family."

MINUTE.

The Association would express its honor for the memory of this dear brother, a member of the Association from the date of its first regular meeting. He was a man of sincere heart, of earnest convictions, of patient energy, of wide intelligence, and of strong Christian faith and character. Born under conditions that exposed him to a wicked prejudice, and made it difficult for him to secure education and culture—by his indomitable energy and his faith in God, he won for himself an honored place in the Kingdom of Christ on earth. Especially was he an active leader in the work of the emancipation of the

slaves, and did much for the instruction and the elevation of the negro race in the North. In his old age his memory was encyclopædic of the good men who in darker days were active in their opposition to slavery, with most of whom he had been personally acquainted. He maintained to the last his activity, and still went about doing good. We shall hold his name in honor, not simply because he was one of the links that connected us with our heroic past, but because to his last days the simplicity and sweetness of his Christian character made him to be loved by all who knew him. To his wife and daughters we extend our warm sympathy, and assure them that the memory of such a husband and father is to them a priceless legacy.

Attest,

H. H. McFARLAND,

Sec'y M. C. A.